

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Always Hold the Baby Bottle

## Never Prop a Bottle

Babies learn about comfort, love, and caring when they are fed. Babies should never have to eat alone. Feeding time should always be a special time for you and your baby.

Some stores sell pillows and toys that hold a bottle in a baby's mouth. But there are many reasons why you should not use these, and never prop a bottle.



**Feeding time should always be a special time for your baby.**

## Your baby could choke

If your baby is alone with the bottle, you will not be there to notice if your baby starts to choke. If you are not there when your baby is choking, you cannot pull the bottle away, pick up the baby, and pat the baby's back.

## Your baby could get an ear infection

The tube of the ear (**eustachian tube**) opens into the throat, to keep the pressure on both sides of the eardrum equal. When a baby eats lying down, the milk or formula can flow from the throat into the ear. This can cause an ear infection. This infection could spread to other parts of the baby's body.

# Your baby's teeth could rot

Many parents think it is not important to take care of baby teeth, since they will be replaced. This is not true. Baby teeth are very important. Babies need healthy teeth to chew food and learn to speak clearly. Children with brown, decayed teeth may feel upset about how they look. When baby teeth are not healthy, the permanent teeth can grow in crooked and crowded.

Propping up a bottle can make baby's teeth decay. When your baby starts to fall asleep, he or she doesn't swallow so often. The liquid sits in the baby's mouth, and the teeth are coated with food that helps germs rot the teeth. This decay is called **baby bottle mouth**.

When decay starts, the teeth get white or brown spots. Then the teeth will start to rot away, which can be very painful for your baby. If your baby's teeth have white or brown spots, take your baby to the dentist.

## What you can do instead of prop

Relax and enjoy the times you feed your baby. Always hold and talk to your baby when feeding with a bottle. This way, as soon as your baby falls asleep, you can take the bottle out of your baby's mouth. Then move your baby a little so that last food is swallowed.

Don't leave a bottle in your baby's crib or play pen. If your baby needs something to suck on to fall asleep, use a pacifier. You could also comfort your child with a blanket or soft toy, rocking, singing, or playing music. Keep your baby's hands free. Babies need to learn how to comfort themselves.



**Comfort your child with a blanket or stuffed toy, rocking, singing, or playing music.**

# Holding while feeding is a special time

When you hold your baby's bottle, you feed your baby's tummy and emotions. Holding helps your baby feel safe and loved. It is a special time when you can both relax and feel close.

## Now that you've read this:

- Tell your nurse or doctor three reasons your shouldn't prop a baby bottle.  
(Check when done.)
- Tell your nurse or doctor how propping a baby bottle can hurt your baby's teeth.  
(Check when done.)
- Tell your nurse or doctor what you can do instead of propping a baby bottle.  
(Check when done.)



If you have any questions or concerns,

- call your child's doctor or  call \_\_\_\_\_

If you want to know more about child health and illness,  
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital  
1919 East Thomas Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85016  
602-933-1400  
866-933-6459  
[www.phoenixchildrens.org](http://www.phoenixchildrens.org)  
Facebook: [facebook.com/theemilycenter](https://www.facebook.com/theemilycenter)  
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#### Disclaimer

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.

Wednesday, July 23, 2014 • DRAFT to family review  
#811 • Written by Joan Lewis, RN • Illustrated by Dennis Swain

## Always Hold the Baby Bottle

Name of Health Care Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Date returned: \_\_\_\_\_  db

## Family Review of Handout

Health care providers: Please teach families with this handout.

Families: Please let us know what you think of this handout.

Would you say this handout is hard to read?  Yes  No

easy to read?  Yes  No

Please circle the parts of the handout that were hard to understand.

Would you say this handout is interesting to read?  Yes  No

Why or why not?

Would you do anything differently after reading  
this handout?  Yes  No

If yes, what?

After reading this handout, do you have any  
questions about the subject?  Yes  No

If yes, what?

Is there anything you don't like about the drawings?

Yes

No

If yes, what?

What changes would you make in this handout to make it better or easier to understand?

Please return your review of this handout to your nurse or doctor or send it to the address below.

The Emily Center  
Health Education Specialist  
Phoenix Children's Hospital  
1919 East Thomas Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85016-7710

602-933-1395

**Thank you for helping us!**